

Message Text

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PAGE 01 VIENTI 05229 141143Z

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ACTION ITFE-00

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 IO-10 ISO-00 INSE-00 SCA-01 DHA-02 ORM-01

L-03 AID-05 HEW-02 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 H-02 USIA-06 DODE-00 OMB-01 PRS-01

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P R 141101Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5057

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL UDORN

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 5229

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, LA

SUBJ: LAO REFUGEES

REF: A) STATE 192482

B) STATE 191337

C) VIENTIANE 5196

1. IN REF A (PARA 4), DEPARTMENT APPEARS TO BE OPERATING ON ASSUMPTION THAT FIGURE OF 300 REPORTED BY IATF REPRESENTS ALL LAO FORMERLY EMPLOYED BY USG AND THEIR FAMILIES NOW IN THAILAND WHO WOULD QUALIFY FOR REFUGEE STATUS UNDER PRIORITY II.

2. WE BELIEVE THIS NUMBER IS PROBABLY TOO LOW AND WOULD LIKE TO KNOW HOW IT WAS ARRIVED AT.

3. THERE IS ALSO QUESTION (RAISED REF C) OF THOSE EMPLOYEES WHO HAVE ELECTED TO REMAIN IN IN LAOS FOR TIME BEING (OFTEN AT OUR URGING, BECAUSE THEIR SERVICES WERE URGENTLY NEEDED DURING DIFFICULT PERIOD HERE) BUT
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PAGE 02 VIENTI 05229 141143Z

WHO MAY DECIDE TO LEAVE SHORTLY AS PATHET LAO TIGHTEN

THEIR CONTROL OVER VIENTIANE AND INCREASE HARASSMENTS WHICH MANY OF THESE EMPLOYEES ARE ALREADY EXPERIENCING (INTIMIDATION OF THEMSELVES AND THEIR FAMILIES, VIRTUALLY COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE AT SEMINARS, ETC). WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT SUCH EMPLOYEES SHOULD RECEIVE LESSER TREATMENT THAN THEIR COUNTERPARTS IN CAMBODIA AND VIET-NAM SIMPLY BECAUSE PROCESS OF POLITICAL CHANGE HERE HAS BEEN OF DIFFERENT CHARACTER, SLOWER, AND LESS CLEAR-CUT THAN ELSEWHERE IN INDOCHINA. TO EXCLUDE SUCH EMPLOYEES "A PRIORI" NOW IS, WE BELIEVE, SIMPLY TO INVITE PROBLEMS FOR USG IN ITS RELATIONS WITH THAILAND LATER ON AND TO INVITE CONGRESSIONAL OR OTHER PRESSURE IN AT LEAST A FEW CASES. WE THEREFORE BELIEVE THAT (A) SOME ALLOWANCE FOR SUCH EMPLOYEES SHOULD BE MADE IN OVER-ALL QUOTA PLANNING; AND (B) NO RPT NO ARBITRARY CUT-OFF DATE FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF REFUGEE STATUS (I.E., BY FLIGHT TO THAILAND) CAN OR SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED TO DETRIMENT OF EMPLOYEES WHO HAVE STAYED ON.

4. IN ADDITION, THERE IS QUESTION OF NUMEROUS LAO ALREADY IN THAILAND WHO DO NOT QUALIFY FOR PRIORITIES I AND II BUT ARE DEFINITELY HIGH-RISK. SINCE IT APPEARS FROM REFS A AND B THAT SUCH LAO WILL BE COMPETING FOR SAME "NUMBERS" WITH VIETNAMESE AND CAMBODIANS WHO DO NOT QUALIFY FOR PRIORITY I OR II, WE BELIEVE THAT ALL RPT ALL LAO WHO DO RPT DO QUALIFY FOR THOSE CATEGORIES SHOULD BE PROCESSED -- OR ACCOUNTED FOR IN QUOTA ALLOCATION -- BEFORE ALLOCATION OF NUMBERS TO NON-QUALIFYING CAMBODIANS AND VIETNAMESE BEGINS.

5. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT 2,500 REPRESENTS A VALID ESTIMATE OF ALL LAO AND DEPENDENTS WHO MIGHT ULTIMATELY QUALIFY UNDER THE THREE PRIORITY CATEGORIES. WE FIRST ADVANCED THIS FIGURE IN VIENTIANE 4792; BANGKOK ENDORSED IT IN BANGKOK 14136; AND DEPARTMENT ITSELF APPEARS TO HAVE USED AN EVEN HIGHER FIGURE (STATE 174077) FOR PLANNING PURPOSES.

6. WE DOUBT THAT MANY SPONSORS -- MUCH LESS THE LAO REFUGEES THEMSELVES -- WILL BE ABLE TO REIMBURSE ICEM FOR TRANSPORTATION. WE TRUST THAT THIS CONDITION WILL NOT BE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 VIENTI 05229 141143Z

STATED OR EMPLOYED IN SUCH A WAY AS TO IMPEDE SEARCH FOR SPONSORS, A PROCESS WHICH WE EXPECT WILL BE DIFFICULT ENOUGH IN ITSELF.

7. REQUEST DEPARTMENT/IATF COMMENTS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REFUGEES, POLICIES, SURVEYS, VOLUNTARY AGENCIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975VIENTI05229
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750281-0087
From: VIENTIANE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750850/aaaabshf.tel
Line Count: 113
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ITFE
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 192482
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 JUN 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <06 NOV 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LAO REFUGEES
TAGS: SREF, LA, VS, CB, TH
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006